

FACT SHEET

FS No. 88-042-1020

ERGONOMICS—COMPUTER KEYBOARD

All keyboards should be tilted away from you with a negative tilt to keep your wrists in neutral posture. Do not extend the legs on the keyboard.

- The keyboard should be at approximately elbow height with upper arms resting at your side. Forearms, wrist, and hand should be in a straight line.
- If your keyboard is not adjustable or is too low, use a pad of paper or some books to raise it up as a quick, temporary fix.
- The keyboard should be directly in front of you. Place the “B” key in front of your belly button.
- Keep your wrists floating while you type, but support your forearms (e.g., on your armrest). Lack of forearm support creates constant shoulder and neck tension.
- Use a full size, detached keyboard when using a laptop for extended periods of time.



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Keyboard and Mouse Wrist Rests

A wrist rest should be at least as wide as the usable portions of the keyboard and should match the shape and the height of the keyboard.

- A keyboard fitted with a wrist rest supports the heel of your hand and minimizes hand contact with sharp table edges.
- Avoid digging the heels of your palm or wrist into a wrist rest, the sharp edge of the desk, a watch or a bracelet.
- The wrist rest is a *rest*, not a parking lot. Don't keep your wrists on the wrist rest while you are typing.

Alternative Keyboards

Conventional keyboards place your hands much closer together than your elbows, causing ulnar deviation (bending the wrist sideways toward the little finger).



Source: Getty image, licensed to APHC

- Alternative keyboards are split either horizontally or vertically to reduce wrist ulnar deviation.
- A vertical split keyboard keeps the wrist in a neutral handshake posture; however, the user must be a touch typist.
- Although split keyboards improve posture, risk factors such as duration, repetition, and forceful typing may still exist.

